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Donna Pucciani

Star-Gazing

In memory of Padre Ernesto

I can imagine his good eye glowing
with the energy of priestly youth,
a boyish passion for God
propelling him up the mountain
to the monastery of black-robed monks.

Now, at ninety-six, Zio Ernesto
has fallen in his cell, bruising his spine
already curved like David's harp.

He gives thanks for the pain,
welcomes the therapist each week
who kneads his back like a new-formed loaf
ready for rising in the heat of the day.

He sings a little psalm in his ancient heart.
He resurrects himself, ready at any moment
for his ascension into heaven.

He will join the spray of the sea, a strange
friarly figure swaying in the sky over bikini sands
and beach umbrellas, into the arms of the Divine,
leaving behind his bent back, his one filmy eye,
the other shining at the beatific vision
like the North Star finding its proper Pole.

He will float over the abbey roofs tiled in prayer,
above the Calabrian hills whose names
only he remembers.

Donna Pucciani has published poetry worldwide in *The Pedestal*, *Italian-Americanana*, *Poetry Salzburg*, *Shi Chao Poetry*, *Agenda*, *Meniscus*, and elsewhere. Her seventh and most recent book is *Edges*.